



DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE MINUTES

An Advisory Group to the City Council

Thursday, October 10, 2013
5:30 PM, Main Street Library

Council Members: Mayor Connie Boardman (Chair), Jim Katapodis (Vice Chair) and Council Member Joe Carchio

Task Force Members: Brett Barnes, Moe Kanoudi, Ron Newman, Ralph Palomares, J.D. Shafer, Susie Smith, Michael Wentworth, Stephanie Wilson Kim Kramer, Cesar Pena

Absent: Domenic Iorfino, Cathy Werblin

City Staff: Fred Wilson, Jennifer McGrath, Chief Kenneth Small, Captain Russell Reinhart, Scott Hess, Kellee Fritzel, Teri Baker, Chris Cole, Janeen Laudenback

Mayor Connie Boardman called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

1. Public Comments

Dixie Terry and Mr. Brady spoke regarding rehabilitation (drug and alcohol) houses located in Downtown and parking permits and red curbs

2. Approval of September 26, 2013 Minutes – The minutes were approved as submitted.

3. Discussion of Brown Act Requirements

City Attorney Jennifer McGrath handed out a paper regarding the Brown Act Regulations. McGrath will provide a presentation on How To Understand/Follow the Brown Act at the October 24th meeting.

4. Presentation by IMG – U.S. Open

James Leitz, Vice President, of IMG Active Sports presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the history of the event and activities leading up to the incident that took place downtown on July 28, 2013. Mr. Leitz agreed that the event has grown too large and needs to be scaled back (from a 17 acre footprint to an 8 acre footprint). The presentation showed the 2013 footprint of the event on the beach and compared it to IMGs plan for the footprint in 2014. There will be less infrastructure, "no freebies", and the event days for set-up and tear down will be scaled back. Beer sponsorships will be addressed and Dukes and Sandy's views will not be obstructed. Mr. Leitz went on to say that the event outreach for the event will be more of a family theme, with a tag line of "100 Years of Surfing." The event will feature surfing, BMX and skateboarding, there will only be 6 to 8 vendor areas and they will eliminate the vendor "dust bowl" /festival village area and no stage/concerts no live entertainment, no DJ, ambient music only. The final Sunday of the event will feature surfing only. For 2014, the event is proposed to be July 26 – August 3rd.

There were several questions from the Task Force members related to the time of the year for the event. Mr. Leitz explained that because it's an international event, the schedule is lined up years in advance in order to coordinate. Mr. Leitz also addressed security concerns. He explained that although they do not anticipate having less security, there will be less posts to secure.

In closing there was a discussion about the need for additional marketing and use of social media to get the message out in advance that there will be behavioral expectations and strict enforcement policies. There was strong sentiment that everyone needs to step up to make next year's event better, not just the promoter.

5. Presentation by Huntington Beach Police Department

Chief Small and Captain Reinhart presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history of police staffing levels, the current Downtown foot beat, and the concentration of ABC licenses in Downtown (47). Chief Small reported that four years ago the City had 237 officers and budget cuts during the economic downturn left the department with only 193 officers. He went on to explain that several new positions have been added to the budget and that by the summer of 2014, the department expects to have 212 officers. The Chief explained that the issues in downtown are not only related to alcohol, but also due to the fact that there is no buffer between the downtown businesses and surrounding residents. Chief Small responded to Stephanie Wilson's questions from the last meeting regarding fines for violation of the Entertainment Permits.

The Task Force members discussed DUI's and the need to have bars close at midnight. In response to questions, the City would have to have justifications/findings to roll back the closing time of existing bars/entertainment hours. Mayor Boardman asked about the feasibility of changing the Municipal Code for operating hours – existing bars/restaurants are grandfathered in with their hours. McGrath did mention that all new bars/restaurants are subject to the recently adopted Council Resolution restricting alcohol sales and entertainment permits which does limit the hours and other activities. Ron Newman mentioned that closing the bars early will have people drinking at house parties, the beach or in cars, based on other cities that have tried the earlier closing.

Stephanie Wilson asked if there was any way to expedite the hiring of Police Officers – Mayor Boardman explained that the City is doing everything feasible to hiring as quickly as possible, including hiring additional background checkers.

Councilmember Carchio mentioned that the people causing the issues/affected need to step up and be part of the solution. The BID needs to make adjustments.

Kim Kramer brought up the upcoming City Council item regarding amending the Downtown Specific Plan regarding how ABC licenses are issued. Scott Hess provided information regarding the permit process for businesses with alcohol sales. The City Council has recommended that all off-site sales be capped at the current level. The Planning Commission is recommending a CUP from Planning Commission for all off-site and on-site alcohol sales. Kim Kramer recommended a cap on all on-sale and off-sale alcohol sales. Several members of the Task Force were in support of the cap; however the cost of the licenses was discussed.

6. Future Agenda Items

- Brown Act Presentation by the City Attorney
- Continue with Public Safety Discussion

Mayor Boardman mentioned that if a Task Force Member wants to request additional information/material that they should ask the Task Force at one of the meetings to be scheduled for a future meeting.

7. Adjournment – Next Meeting October 24, 2013

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.